
About the Law Enforcement and Corrections Standards and Testing Program

The Law Enforcement and Corrections Standards and Testing Program is sponsored by the Office of Science and Technology of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), U.S. Department of Justice. The program responds to the mandate of the Justice System Improvement Act of 1979, which directed NIJ to encourage research and development to improve the criminal justice system and to disseminate the results to Federal, State, and local agencies.

The Law Enforcement and Corrections Standards and Testing Program is an applied research effort that determines the technological needs of justice system agencies, sets minimum performance standards for specific devices, tests commercially available equipment against those standards, and disseminates the standards and the test results to criminal justice agencies nationwide and internationally.

The program operates through the following:

- The **Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Advisory Council (LECTAC)**, consisting of nationally recognized criminal justice practitioners from Federal, State, and local agencies, assesses technological needs and sets priorities for research programs and items to be evaluated and tested.
- The **Office of Law Enforcement Standards (OLES)** at the National Institute of Standards and Technology develops voluntary national performance standards for compliance testing to ensure that individual items of equipment are suitable for use by criminal justice agencies. The equipment standards developed by OLES are based on laboratory evaluation of commercially available products in order to devise precise test methods that can be universally applied by any qualified testing laboratory and to establish minimum performance requirements for each attribute of a piece of equipment that is essential to how it functions. OLES-developed standards can serve as design criteria for manufacturers or as the basis for equipment evaluation. The application of the standards, which are highly technical in nature, is augmented through the publication of equipment performance reports and user guides. Individual jurisdictions may use the standards in their own laboratories to test equipment, have equipment tested on their behalf using the standards, or cite the standards in procurement specifications.
- The **National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC)**, operated by a grantee, supervises a national compliance testing program conducted by independent laboratories. The standards developed by OLES serve as performance benchmarks against which commercial equipment is measured. The facilities, personnel, and testing capabilities of the independent laboratories are evaluated by OLES prior to testing each item of equipment. In addition, OLES helps NLECTC staff review and analyze data. Test results are published in consumer product reports designed to help justice system procurement officials make informed purchasing decisions.

Publications are available at no charge through NLECTC. Some documents are also available online through the Justice Technology Information Network (JUSTNET), the center's Internet/World Wide Web site. To request a document or additional information, call 800-248-2742 or 301-519-5060, or write:

National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center

2277 Research Boulevard

Mail Stop 8J

Rockville, MD 20850

E-mail: asknlectc@nlectc.org

World Wide Web address: <http://www.justnet.org>

About the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System

The National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) system exists to support the Nation's structure of State and local law enforcement and corrections. The United States has more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies, 50 State correctional systems, and thousands of prisons and jails. The fragmented nature of law enforcement and corrections impedes the dissemination of valuable new information, fosters a patchwork marketplace that discourages the commercialization of new technologies, and underscores the need for uniform performance standards for equipment and technologies.

The National Institute of Justice's (NIJ's) Office of Science and Technology (OS&T) created NLECTC in 1994 as a national system of technology centers that are clearinghouses of information and sources of technology assistance and that also attend to special needs, including technology commercialization and standards development.

The NLECTC system's purpose is to determine the needs of the law enforcement and corrections communities and assist them in understanding, using, and benefitting from new and existing technologies that, increasingly, are vital levers of progress in criminal justice. NIJ/OS&T and the NLECTC system are the only current programs developed by the Federal Government that focus solely on the development and transfer of technologies to State and local law enforcement and corrections.

NLECTC is a program of NIJ, the research and development arm of the U.S. Department of Justice. The system currently consists of a national center, five regional centers, and several speciality offices. Also contributing to the initiatives of the center system is the Office of Law Enforcement Standards. The centers are co-located with a host organization or agency that specializes in one or more areas of technology research and development.

The National Center, located in Rockville, Maryland, is the system's information hub. Regional centers are currently located in Alaska, California, Colorado, New York, and South Carolina. Speciality centers located around the country deal with border matters (California), commercialization of law enforcement and corrections technologies (West Virginia), rural law enforcement issues (Kentucky), and standards and testing (Maryland).

Each center shares roles with the other centers and has distinctive characteristics. All are focused on helping law enforcement and corrections take full advantage of technology's rapidly growing capacity to serve the purposes of crime control and the criminal justice system.

A national body of criminal justice professionals, the Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Advisory Council (LECTAC), helps identify research and development priorities, thereby influencing the work of the NLECTC system. In addition, each NLECTC center has a regional advisory council of law enforcement and corrections officials. Together, LECTAC and the advisory councils help to keep the NLECTC system attentive to technological priorities and the needs of law enforcement and corrections. They help to link the end user with the developer to create technologies that adequately meet operational requirements and establish which potential technologies should be pursued for development.

All of the current regional centers have distinctive roles or focus areas, that, in many cases, are aligned with the expertise of host organizations and agencies. The centers are currently operated under cooperative agreements or interagency agreements with host organizations and agencies whose employees staff the centers.

To receive more information or to add your name to the NLECTC mailing list, call 800–248–2742 or 301–519–5060, or write:

National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center

2277 Research Boulevard

Mail Stop 8J

Rockville, MD 20850

E-mail: asknlectc@nlectc.org

World Wide Web address: <http://www.justnet.org>

The following is a list of NLECTC regional and affiliated facilities that assist NIJ in fulfilling its mission.

NLECTC–Northeast

26 Electronic Parkway

Rome, NY 13441–4514

(p) 888–338–0584

(f) 315–330–4315

E-mail: nlectc_ne@rl.af.mil

NLECTC–Southeast

5300 International Boulevard

North Charleston, SC 29418

(p) 800–292–4385

(f) 843–760–4611

E-mail: nlectc-se@nlectc-se.org

NLECTC–Rocky Mountain

2050 East Iliff Avenue

Denver, CO 80208

(p) 800–416–8086

(f) 303–871–2500

E-mail: nlectc@du.edu

NLECTC–West

c/o The Aerospace Corporation

2350 East El Segundo Boulevard

El Segundo, CA 90245–4691

(p) 888–548–1618

(f) 310–336–2227

E-mail: nlectc@law-west.org

NLECTC–Northwest

3000 C Street

Suite 304

Anchorage, AK 99503–3975

(p) 866–569–2969

(f) 907–569–6939

E-mail: nlectc_nw@ctsc.net

Border Research and Technology Center

1010 Second Avenue

Suite 1920

San Diego, CA 92101–4912

(p) 888–656–2782

(f) 888–660–2782

E-mail: info@brtc.nlectc.org

Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center

101 Bulldog Lane
Hazard, KY 41701
(p) 866-787-2553
(f) 606-436-6758
E-mail: *ruletc@aol.com*

Office of Law Enforcement Technology Commercialization

2001 Main Street
Suite 500
Wheeling, WV 26003
(p) 888-306-5382
(f) 304-230-2310
E-mail: *oletc@oletc.org*

Office of Law Enforcement Standards

100 Bureau Drive
Stop 8102
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-8102
(p) 301-975-2757
(f) 301-948-0978
E-mail: *oles@nist.gov*

About the Office of Law Enforcement Standards

The Office of Law Enforcement Standards (OLES) was established as a matrix management organization in 1971 through a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Departments of Justice and Commerce based on the recommendations of the President's Commission on Crime. OLES's mission is to apply science and technology to the needs of the criminal justice community, including law enforcement, corrections, forensic science, and the fire service. While its major objective is to develop minimum performance standards, which are promulgated as voluntary national standards, OLES also undertakes studies leading to the publication of technical reports and user guides.

The areas of research investigated by OLES include clothing, communication systems, emergency equipment, investigative aids, protective equipment, security systems, vehicles, weapons, and analytical techniques and standard reference materials used by the forensic science community. The composition of OLES's projects varies depending on priorities of the criminal justice community at any given time and, as necessary, draws on the resources of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

OLES assists law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in acquiring, on a cost-effective basis, the high-quality resources they need to do their jobs. To accomplish this, OLES:

- Develops methods for testing equipment performance and examining evidentiary materials.
- Develops standards for equipment and operating procedures.
- Develops standard reference materials.
- Performs other scientific and engineering research as required.

Since the program began in 1971, OLES has coordinated the development of nearly 200 standards, user guides, and advisory reports. Topics range from performance parameters of police patrol vehicles, to performance reports on various speed-measuring devices, to soft body armor testing, to analytical procedures for developing DNA profiles.

The application of technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice community continues to increase. The proper adoption of the products resulting from emerging technologies and the assessment of equipment performance, systems, methodologies, etc., used by criminal justice practitioners constitute critical issues having safety and legal ramifications. The consequences of inadequate equipment performance or inadequate test methods can range from inconvenient to catastrophic. In addition, these deficiencies can adversely affect the general population when they increase public safety costs, preclude arrest, or result in evidence found to be inadmissible in court.